



FINAL STRATEGIC PLAN
OF THE
LASSEN PARK FOUNDATION

2010 – 2012

A PASSION FOR LASSEN

The Lassen Park Foundation
PO Box 3155
Chico, CA 95927
(530) 898-9309
www.lassenparkfoundation.org

Date: 1/29/10

INTRODUCTION

The Lassen Park Foundation has been the philanthropic partner to Lassen Volcanic National Park and other public agencies and non-profits for over 25 years. By raising philanthropic dollars to match government investments, two major visitor improvements to the Park have been built: The Lassen Crossroads Information Center and the Kohm Yah-mah-nee Visitor Center. In addition the Lassen Park Foundation has supported numerous smaller projects, which have enhanced the visitor experience, improved interpretive services, and increased our understanding of the natural world. Finally, the Foundation has also invested heavily in supporting youth programs over the years, particularly camping programs for challenged low-income youth, a snowshoe program in the winter months, and an interpretive intern program that provides young people with meaningful work experience and the Park Service with additional support. All told, the Lassen Park Foundation has raised over \$1,220,000 from private individuals and foundations.

This strategic planning effort emerges from the need to take stock of the Lassen Park Foundation on its 25th anniversary and consider how it can best work with Lassen Volcanic National Park in preserving and interpreting its geological, biological, and cultural resources, for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of present and future generations.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

The National Park System is truly America's best idea and Lassen Volcanic National Park is a dazzling gem within this system. Since 1916 the Park has provided a sense of place to the residents of Northern California as well as a haven for species, a looking glass into the earth's crust, and the sense of possibility that wilderness inspires in us all. While our National Parks belong to the American people, there is no question that individual parks need the support of dedicated groups of people committed to preserving, interpreting, and sharing the values of public lands and waters with the next generation. For Lassen Volcanic National Park, that group is the Lassen Park Foundation which has raised funds in support of Park programs and facilities for over 25 years.

The Lassen Park Foundation identifies the following major trends as critical to its ability to effectively position itself in support of Lassen Volcanic National Park:

- Lassen Volcanic National Park and all of its facilities and programs are as important as ever to families and travelers both domestically and internationally. The Park does not have sufficient funding at times to adequately fully care for and promote all of its magnificent assets...an area where the Lassen Park Foundation can be helpful.
- Profound demographic changes in America reflect both an increase in single-parent families as well as ever greater ethnic diversity. Evolving marketing, visitor service programs, interpretive exhibits, redesigned campgrounds etc. can all help to attract and engage more diverse families.
- Today's youth have less exposure to nature than in prior generations, but when given the opportunity to experience the Park, inevitably blossom.
- Older youth are increasingly interested in volunteer and "hands-on" service learning opportunities. They are inheriting a world where an increased emphasis on "green" and "sustainable" lifestyles and technologies can intersect with a greater appreciation for the natural world.
- Technology is increasingly opening up ways to educate people about the Lassen area and create greater ease in accessing Park services.

- Planned giving is a proven way for people to leave an important legacy and an area where the Foundation can provide opportunities for increased philanthropy;
- A profound gratitude for a sense of place exists in communities such as Lake Almanor, creating opportunities for recruiting new Directors and supporters to the Lassen Park Foundation.

The Lassen Park Foundation recognizes that these trends must be embraced to help Lassen Volcanic National Park increase visitor diversity, enhance infrastructure for greater visitor enjoyment and safety, and expand opportunities for youth to explore the Park and gain “*A Passion for Lassen.*” We enthusiastically find ourselves committing to sharing Lassen Volcanic National Park with new generations of Americans and global visitors who want to experience this iconic volcanic landscape.

OUR MISSION

The Lassen Park Foundation provides philanthropic support to preserve and interpret the special natural and cultural resources of Lassen Volcanic National Park and its environs for present and future generations.

OUR CORE VALUES

The work of the Lassen Park Foundation is inspired by “*A Passion for Lassen.*” The Foundation’s Directors and supporters have been challenged, reinvigorated and inspired by time spent in Lassen Volcanic National Park. We wish to share this gift with present and future generations by living up to the following values in our work together:

STEWARDSHIP: We are committed to the effective stewardship of Lassen Volcanic National Park and its environs.

INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE: We actively encourage diverse populations to enjoy Lassen, to attend our events, and to join our organization.

COMMITTED TO FUTURE GENERATIONS: We extend “*A Passion for Lassen*” to future generations by providing meaningful opportunities for youth to explore this extraordinary natural environment. We are a partner for challenged youth, actively ensuring that they have opportunities to camp in the Park.

PHILANTHROPIC: We are the philanthropic partner to Lassen Volcanic National Park, sharing our time, our wealth, and our wisdom as a way of expressing our gratitude to the Park for the many gifts and wonderful memories it provides to each of us personally and to our families and friends.

OUR GOALS, STEPS AND ACTIONS

This 3-year Strategic Plan covers the period of January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2012. Our long-term visions direct our 3-year goals which include strategic steps and key actions that will drive our success.

Our Vision: *Excellent Lassen Volcanic National Park facilities provide safe and sustainable educational and recreation opportunities for visitors.*

GOAL 1: **RAISE \$500,000 TO SUPPORT REHABILITATION OF THE LASSEN PEAK TRAIL THROUGH THE REACH THE PEAK CAMPAIGN.**

Step 1.1 **Collaborate closely with Park staff in the design of the *Reach the Peak Campaign*.**

- Action 1.1.1 Establish a *Reach the Peak Campaign* subcommittee of the Development Committee.
- Action 1.1.2 Coordinate with Lassen Volcanic National Park to develop a capital campaign plan for the *Reach the Peak* project.
- Action 1.1.3 Clarify how funds raised through the Lassen Park Foundation can be applied within the wider *Reach the Peak* effort.
- Action 1.1.4 Clarify private match that needs to be raised and develop mechanisms for individual philanthropic contributions (See Step 1.4).
- Action 1.1.5 Establish a regular schedule for check-ins with the Park Superintendent.

Responsible: *Reach the Peak Subcommittee*

Step 1.2 Implement a communication plan for the *Reach the Peak Campaign* with Lassen Volcanic National Park.

Action 1.2.1 Coordinate publicity and outreach with Lassen Volcanic National Park. Make sure that contribution opportunities are built into all announcements on the partnership between Lassen Volcanic National Park and the Lassen Park Foundation.

Action 1.2.2 Lassen Park Foundation Chair will give a speech on National Trails Day to support the *Reach the Peak* public launch.

Action 1.2.3 Prepare press releases and web updates on *Reach the Peak*.

Action 1.2.4 Rework the video on *Reach the Peak* to include donation opportunities with the Foundation.

Action 1.2.5 Distribute the *Reach the Peak* video on the Foundation's web site, through Directors, on U-tube, and as a link to the Lassen Facebook site.

Action 1.2.6 Link promotion for *Reach the Peak* with TV events in Northern California such as the Ken Burns National Park series.

Responsible: Information Technology and Marketing Committee

Step 1.3 Raise funds for "*Reach the Peak*."

Action 1.3.1 Submit at least two grants in 2010 (such as Scenic Byways and Sierra Nevada Conservancy).

Action 1.3.2 Provide contribution opportunities on the Lassen Park Foundation and Lassen Volcanic National Park web sites, at Lassen Visitor Center, at the Lassen Peak Trailhead, Drakesbad, and all Lassen Volcanic National Park concession facilities.

Action 1.3.3 Provide systematic fundraising appeals to the Lassen Park Foundation's supporters.

Action 1.3.4 Collaborate with Lassen Volcanic National Park, concessionaires, and the Lassen Association to develop interpretive items. A percent of the sales will be applied to the *Reach the Peak* project.

Action 1.3.5 Utilize past major donors as a base for giving to the *Reach the Peak* campaign and add an outreach to Park users, in order to discover new donors.

Action 1.3.6 Identify regional corporate donors (such as Redding Rancheria) and request contributions.

Action 1.3.7 Partner with the National Park Trust or other national organizations that support National Park investments.

Responsible: Development Committee and Reach the Peak Subcommittee

Step 1.4 Support the Park Superintendent’s efforts to secure federal funds.

Action 1.4.1 Provide letters, phone calls and other forms of support for federal funding allocations submitted by Lassen Volcanic National Park staff.

Action 1.4.2 Submit grant proposals to private and public entities in a coordinated fashion with Lassen Volcanic National Park staff as possible match for federal funds.

Responsible: Reach the Peak Subcommittee

Our Vision:

Lassen Volcanic National Park is a recognized top destination for challenged youth to benefit from the unparalleled diversity of educational and recreational experiences the Park offers.

GOAL 2:

INCREASE THE NUMBER OF CHALLENGED YOUTH VISITING LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK.

Step 2.1 Double the number of challenged youth camping participants in 2010

Action 2.1.1 Increase funding for the Challenged Youth Program from \$14,000 (2009) to \$25,000 (2010) and benefit 400 challenged youths.

Action 2.1.2 Promote the expanded program early to all organizations who have previously received Foundation funds and successfully brought challenged youth groups to the Park.

Action 2.1.3 Solicit grant requests via web, mail and through the Board of Directors to community groups that provide challenged youth camping experiences throughout California, Oregon and Washington.

Responsible: Youth and Projects Committee

Step 2.2 Create the Lassen Park Foundation Youth and Projects Committee to research and guide long-term opportunities for a Challenged Youth Program

Action 2.2.1 Recruit Board and non-Board supporters to the Youth and Projects Committee with the goal of establishing a vision and benchmarks for success for Challenged Youth Camping.

Action 2.2.2 Explore the Lassen Park Foundation's role in advancing challenged youth programs and the possibilities and constraints of moving beyond a merely funding role.

Action 2.2.3 Research both private and government grant opportunities (with Lassen Volcanic National Park staff) for expanding challenged youth programs in the Park.

Action 2.2.4 Work with Park staff to research infrastructure opportunities for youth programs – what is currently available in Lassen Volcanic National Park and what other facilities may be needed for an expanded youth program in the future.

Action 2.2.5 Research other youth programs that utilize National Parks (such as NatureBridge, Yosemite Institute – Wildlink or Student Conservation Association programs) for possible partnership opportunities to share human, physical, and fiscal resources to achieve mutual goals.

Action 2.2.6 Explore the possibility of having a graduate student or consultant prepare a business plan for expanding the Challenged Youth Program in the Park.

Responsible: Youth and Projects Committee

Step 2.3 Develop a “communications plan” to showcase the value of the Lassen Park Foundation’s Challenged Youth Program to communities and prospective donors.

Action 2.3.1 Feature the Challenged Youth Program on the website and link to giving opportunities. Highlight the “Jaguar Camping” tour video and other materials developed by campers.

Action 2.3.2 Include challenged youth outcomes and stories as a regular feature in the Foundation newsletter.

Action 2.3.3 Ensure Northern California schools, churches, social service, and sponsoring organizations like Rotary are fully aware of the Challenged Youth Program supported by the Lassen Park Foundation.

Action 2.3.4 Promote the Challenged Youth Program in regional communities by asking Directors to organize various media releases about the Program (newspapers, TV, radio, etc.) and make presentations to local service groups.

Responsible: Information Technology and Marketing Committee

Step 2.4 Raise funds for the Challenged Youth Program

Action 2.4.1 Launch a Challenged Youth Program appeal each spring.

Action 2.4.2 Research corporate and foundation donors committed to funding youth programs and submit proposals.

Responsible: Development Committee

Step 2.5 Actively support other youth programs in the Park

Action 2.5.1 Determine the annual needs for the Snowshoe and Interpretive Intern Programs with Park staff.

Action 2.5.2 Promote the Snowshoe and Interpretive Intern Programs through the website, newsletters, and other media.

Action 2.5.3 Develop a business plan to take the Park to youth in Northern California such as the “Volcano Van” idea to inspire greater knowledge and visitation.

Responsible: Youth and Projects Committee – Information Technology and Marketing Committee

Our Vision:

The Lassen Park Foundation's organizational capacity evolves to provide steady advocates and philanthropic support for Lassen Volcanic National Park over multiple generations.

GOAL 3:

DEVELOP THE LONG-TERM INTERNAL CAPACITY OF THE LASSEN PARK FOUNDATION

Step 3.1: Strengthen the role of Board committees

- Action 3.1.1 Establish six permanent committees:
1. Executive and Personnel Committee — Made up of the Foundation Chair, a representative of committees 3 -6 below and two at large Directors. Ratified by the full Board for 1 year terms.
 2. Nominations Committee
 3. Development Committee
 - a. Reach the Peak Subcommittee
 - b. Lake Almanor Development/Auction Subcommittee
 4. Audit, Finance and Governance Committee
 5. Youth and Projects Committee
 6. Information Technology and Marketing Committee
- Action 3.1.2 Establish ad hoc committees solely when there is a key function for a defined period of time (such as the Reach the Peak Subcommittee).
- Action 3.1.3 Require all Directors to actively engage in at least one committee.
- Action 3.1.4 Recruit committee chairs and vice-chairs with an eye towards new leadership and succession planning.
- Action 3.1.5 Invite 20% of each committee to include non-Board members to groom prospective Directors and/or attract needed expertise.
- Action 3.1.6 Establish an annual calendar of committee meetings.
- Action 3.1.7 Develop a Board consent agenda for committee reports distributed with Board packets prior to meetings. Present only key committee recommendations and discussion items for major decisions at the Board meetings.
- Action 3.1.8 Join GOTOMEETING and provide it as an opportunity for all Directors to participate in meetings while minimizing transportation time and costs.
- Responsible: Executive and Personnel Committee and the Foundation Chair. The Executive Director serves as the liaison for the committees.*

Step 3.2: Strengthen Board recruitment

- Action 3.2.1 Increase the number of active Directors and ex-Directors who can play a strong role on the Nominations Committee.
- Action 3.2.2 Identify prospects for multi-year recruitment opportunities. Individually meet with them – invite them to participate on a committee or for an event, etc.
- Action 3.2.3 Develop a Board orientation packet, which describes the Lassen Park Foundation’s expectations of Directors and emphasizes that “We are a working Board and we value each Board member’s contributions.”
- Action 3.2.4 Showcase the stature of being a Board member by providing a short biography, picture, statement “why I love to support Lassen Volcanic National Park”, and home town of our current Board members on the new web site.

Responsible: Nominations Committee

Step 3.3: Enhance Board giving

- Action 3.3.1 Provide a Board gift request letter every year consistent with the Board orientation packet (see 3.2.3).
- Action 3.3.2 Keep former Directors engaged through the establishment of an Honorary and Emeritus Director program.
- Action 3.3.3 Promote planned giving options to all Directors and ex-Directors.
- Action 3.3.4 Encourage annual Board gift to be applied to non-restricted funds to build staff capacity.

Responsible: Development Committee

Step 3.4: Enhance staff capacity

- Action 3.4.1 Secure capacity-building grants and private contributions for the Lassen Park Foundation that increase staff capacity.
- Action 3.4.2 Start the process of securing a full time Development Director/Administrative Manager.
- Action 3.4.2 Have Executive Director manage consultants/grad students/senior volunteers who can take responsibility for well-defined work pieces such as web site updates, youth outreach, business plans, etc.).
- Action 3.4.3 Document the roles, responsibilities and time needs of the staff positions to ensure that as new projects are approved, realistic assessments are made about staff capacity.
- Action 3.4.4 Encourage greater non-restricted funds, including having all annual Board gifts be non-restricted and ensuring that annual appeals and web solicitations make non-restricted funding the default option.

Responsible: Executive Director and Executive and Personnel Committee.

Our Vision:

The Lassen Park Foundation's organizational capacity evolves to provide steady advocates and philanthropic support for Lassen Volcanic National Park over multiple generations.

GOAL 4:

ENHANCE THE LASSEN PARK FOUNDATION'S REPUTATION AND VISIBILITY.

Step 4.1: Develop a communications plan to promote the Lassen Park Foundation's mission and goals.

- Action 4.1.1 Release the new web site and keep it current.
- Action 4.1.2 Research and hire a student/volunteer to manage regular web updates under the Executive Director's direction.
- Action 4.1.3 Integrate communication plans for Steps 1.2 and 2.3 into wider name recognition for the Lassen Park Foundation.
- Action 4.1.4 Orchestrate formal news releases for key projects and successes from the Lassen Park Foundation.

Responsible: Information Technology and Marketing Committee

Step 4.2: Expand giving opportunities

- Action 4.2.1 Create a planned giving option for people with "A Passion for Lassen." Provide opportunities on the web site and educate local lawyers and community foundation staff on LPF's planned giving goals.
- Action 4.2.2 Create a tiered giving system to ask people to step up into higher giving levels over time. Incorporate this system in annual appeals and the web site.
- Action 4.2.3 Prepare an annual "donor appeal plan" to identify prospective partners and include a contact strategy.

Responsible: Development Committee

Step 4.3: Showcase the Lassen Park Foundation's transparency

- Action 4.3.1 Work with an independent CPA firm to provide audited financial statements, at a level that can be supported by the Foundation's resources.
- Action 4.3.2 Revise the Foundation's by-laws to reflect the strategic plan.
- Action 4.3.3 Include a conflict of interest policy for all Directors in the Board packet.
- Action 4.3.4 Register the Foundation with charity watchdogs such as GuideStar or the American Institute of Philanthropy.

Responsible: Audit, Finance and Governance Committee